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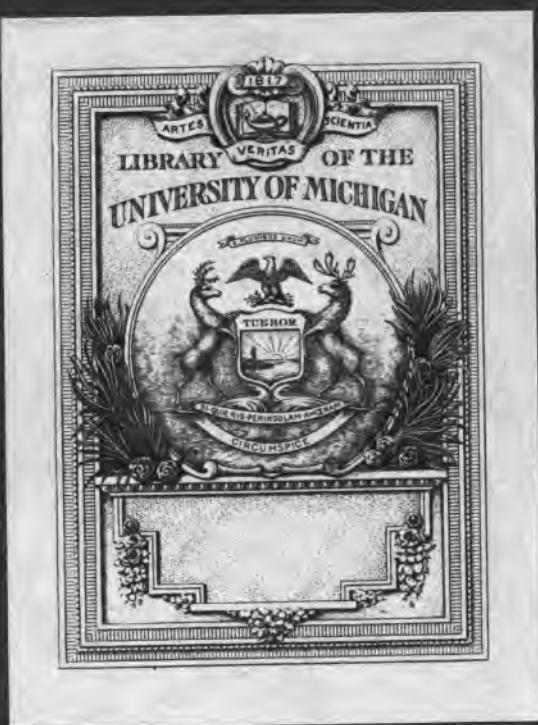
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THE LIBRARY AND CABINET

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OF THE

Rhode Island Historical Society.

THEIR ORIGIN AND LEADING FEATURES TOGETHER WITH  
A CLASSIFIED SUMMARY OF THEIR CONTENTS.

BY AMOS PERRY,

LIBRARIAN AND CABINET KEEPER.



PROVIDENCE:

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY SNOW & FARNHAM.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY.

1891-92.

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## THE LIBRARY OF THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY.\*

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### A BRIEF SKETCH OF ITS CONTENTS.

[Printed by Vote of the Society.]

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THE character, scope and marked features of this library are best understood by glancing at the history of the institution to which it belongs.

This Society was organized seventy years ago by men who were deeply interested to secure a truthful history of the State and to perpetuate the memory of its founders and benefactors. The work of collecting material to this end was begun at once, and has been carried forward with more or less interest to the present time. During its first twelve years the Society was provided by the General Assembly (which early made it, and has continued it, the custodian of valuable documents) with a room in the State House for its meetings and for the safe keeping of its collections. During its next ten years it had quarters elsewhere (three years in Brown & Ives' counting-room and seven years in the Arcade), and during its last forty-eight years it has occupied its own two-story building, which was, until a recent date, only 30 by 50 feet, and is situated on lots 66 and 68 Waterman street. With this building has been joined a structure which greatly enlarges the Society's accommodations and increases its means of usefulness.

The collections of the Society are considered as belonging to one of the three following classes :

- A. Manuscripts.
- B. Printed matter.
- C. Other things that properly belong to an historical museum.

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\* See Index, page 24.

A. The manuscripts of the library, gathered from various sources and a good number of them rescued from fire or pulp-vats by zealous antiquaries, constitute one of the marked features of the library. Thus, saved from impending destruction, these manuscripts will repay a careful scrutiny. They relate to almost every department of government, branch of business, and social, religious and political question of the day. The collection of family papers is noteworthy, and the fact can hardly escape attention that most of the families represented by one or more volumes of papers had relations more or less intimate with our nation as well as with our State.

The terms *manuscripts* and *papers* are often used here synonymous-ly to indicate the titles rather than the contents of certain volumes. These manuscript volumes, many of them called papers, consist of letters, diaries, sermons, military-rolls, pay-rolls, mercantile ac-counts, post-office records, deeds, wills, official reports on the building of Revolutionary war ships, etc. Some of them belong to the Colonial period of our State and country, some to the Confederation period and some to a later period. Some are State records, some town records, court records, society records, church, family and personal records, and some are accounts of remarkable events and incidents from the settlement of the State to a recent period.

The library contains a good collection of Orderly Books relating to a part of our Revolutionary history enacted on Rhode Island soil or by Rhode Island troops. Six nicely-bound volumes of this class have been recently presented by Mr. Jesse Metcalf; also, a well-bound copy of Col. Sylvanus Reed's Orderly Book, kept in camp at Providence during the summer of 1778, is the gift of Mrs. Caroline Gallup Reed, of New York. It is due to say, however, that the original documents of this class have not yet received, owing to the hitherto crowded condition of the cabinet, the attention they merit.

Many of the manuscripts are arranged with some regard to chrono-logical order, or to their subject matter. First on this list are the papers of Moses Brown, who was merchant, manufacturer and phil-anthropist. He was born in Providence in 1738, and died there in 1836. His eighteen folio volumes are in two series. The first series has fourteen volumes, whose contents are arranged in chrono-logical order as follows :

## MOSES BROWN PAPERS.

Vol. I. 1735-1770. Contains many letters written within this period, among which are several from Governor Joseph Wanton, 1769 and 1770, Nicholas and John Brown, Obadiah Brown and many leading men in different places.

Vol. II. 1770-1778. Contains a copy of Moses Brown's formal act, manumitting his slaves in November, 1773. Also many letters showing the situation of the State and country between 1770 and 1778.

Vol. III. 1778-1782. Contains an appeal from President James Manning of the Rhode Island College to Moses Brown for the poor of Providence, dated March, 1779. Nicholas Brown tells his brother, Moses, of the pitiful condition of a man who came from Newport in "the Flagg," meaning, probably, under the "flag of truce."

Vol. IV. 1782-1784. Contains a pretty full representation of Moses Brown's relations to his brothers and his brethren in the church.

Vol. V. 1784-1787. Letters and copies.

Vol. VI. 1787-1789. In this volume, as in Vol. V., are letters from Rev. Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newport to Moses Brown, who co-operated with him in the anti-slavery movement.

Vol. VII. 1789-1792. Interesting correspondence between the brothers, Moses and John Brown.

Vol. VIII. 1792-1796. Moses and John Brown correspond and Samuel Slater's name appears.

Vol. IX. 1796-1799. William Rotch of New Bedford is a correspondent.

Vol. X. 1800-1804. Contains appeals for charity.

Vol. XI. 1804-1810. Bill of John B. Chace for nice China table-ware, bought in Canton for Moses Brown.

Vol. XII. 1810-1816. Contains numerous letters from persons whose names are now familiar, like John Pitman, B. Howland, Noah Worcester, John Osborne, J. G. Chadsy and Moses Brown's son, Obadiah. (1771-1822.)

Vol. XIII. 1816-1832. Letters from Samuel Coates, of Philadelphia, in which the name of Stephen Girard occurs, and the ques-

tions of anti-slavery and a branch at Providence of the U. S. Bank are referred to.

Vol. XIV. 1822-1842. Replete with interest. July 3, 1822. William R. Staples notified Moses Brown in a circular that the General Assembly granted, at its June session, the Charter of the R. I. Historical Society, and that he (Mr. Brown) had been elected a member and was invited to attend a meeting to be held on the 19th of July for the adoption of by-laws and the election of officers. At that meeting Mr. Brown presided and for twenty-six years the 19th of July was observed as the anniversary of the society and of the King Charles II. Charter.

The second series is as follows:

#### MOSES BROWN PAPERS.

Vol. I. *Miscellaneous.* 1722-1803. Contains Backus's list of Presidents and Governors of the Rhode Island and Providence Plantations with their ecclesiastical belongings, and many other curious and interesting documents.

Vol. II. *Miscellaneous.* 1762-1824. The contents of this volume relate mostly to family, religious and business matters; only a few of the papers are dated. Interspersed are lottery tickets, epitaphs and amusing letters. One lottery ticket is to help re-build Faneuil Hall in Boston, November, 1769. There is a list of voters at Providence town meetings, and also a concise statement of how many voted the Federal ticket and how many the Democratic in each town in the State from 1809 to 1812 inclusive. Also "A List of Persons who Proxed for General Officers in the Town of Cranston agreeably to Law, April 15, 1807."

Vol. III. *Miscellaneous.* 1678-1824. Contains Dr. John Clarke's Will, dated April 20, 1676. Deed of land in Pawtuxet by Andrew Harris, October 9, 1678, and other interesting old documents.

Vol. IV., which is the eighteenth volume of the whole series, has been recently collected and arranged. It consists of genealogies of Rhode Island families and biographical notes with interesting scraps and bits of information about Pardon Tillinghast and other noted men of an early period. It has a plat of Providence, which is believed to be one of the oldest extant. Further on in this compilation (p. 16)

are notices of other contributions by Moses Brown to our local history.

The Theodore Foster volumes, eighteen in number, are less bulky and less uniform in size, title and arrangement, causing much inconvenience in shelving them. Chronological order is almost ignored. One of these volumes is made up exclusively of printed matter, and several of them are of a mixed character. While most of the volumes are folios, one of them is of extraordinary dimensions, and two or three of them are quite small. Theodore Foster, who collected these papers, was born in Brookfield, Mass., in 1752; graduated at Rhode Island College in 1770; studied law and settled in Providence; married a sister of Gov. Arthur Fenner; was town clerk of Providence and United States Senator 1790-1803. He died in Providence in 1828. The Foster papers constitute two series, the first of which is as follows:

#### FOSTER PAPERS.

Vols. I, II and III. 1640-1801. Contain some copies and many original documents relating to the early settlement of Providence; also some Revolutionary War papers, and some papers collected by Mr. Foster while in the United States Senate.

Vols. IV and V. 1649-1754. Contain original documents of Roger Williams, Samuel Gorton, John Whipple and others. Also Revolutionary correspondence.

Vol. VI. Contains wills, genealogies, court dockets and law forms. 1785-1791.

Vol. VII. Contains printed hand-bills, etc.

Vol. VIII. Contains genealogical accounts of families by the name of Pincheon, Foster, Williams, Olney, Crawford, Arnold, Westcott and others.

Vol. IX. Contains the first chapter of a History of Rhode Island and copies of old records.

Vols. X and XI. Contain muster-rolls, letters, etc. 1777-1825.

Vol. XII. Contains genealogies and historical sketches.

Vol. XIII. Contains writs and judicial proceedings.

Vol. XIV. Contains the census of Rhode Island in 1782.

The second series of Foster papers is as follows:

## FOSTER CORRESPONDENCE.

Vols. I and II. 1746-1791. Contain original and copied letters from leading citizens of the State and the country, such as John Brown, Alexander Hamilton, Welcome Arnold, David Howell, Gov. William Greene, Gen. Henry Knox, Henry Marchant, etc.; also correspondence with the Earl of Loudoun in 1756.

Vols. III and IV. 1795-1823. Contain a collection of letters from Dr. Solomon Drowne and many leading citizens belonging to the State in the latter part of the last century and the early part of this century. On page 72, the Act establishing, under King George and the Governor of the Colony, the United Company of Artillery, April 2, 1775, is duly certified by the Secretary of State, Henry Ward, April 24, 1776.

Theodore Foster left a good number of inter-leaved almanacs which he statedly used as diaries and note books. For the lack of due supervision, or for some other reason readily surmised, several of these have disappeared. Two almanac diaries kept at the old fulling mill in Warwick during the years 1756 and 1757, by a descendant of Elder Pardon Tillinghast, are still preserved. One of the most curious almanac diaries in this library was kept by the Rev. Dr. Ezra Stiles in 1789. On the 13th of February he made the following minute: "Gen. Ethan Allen of Vermont died and went to Hell this day."

While the Moses Brown and Theodore Foster papers are the most numerous, best known and hold a prominent place in this department of the library, there are other series of papers in some respects more interesting and valuable, as will appear from the following very imperfect list:

## MILITARY PAPERS.

These papers, comprising four volumes, relate in some way to the military affairs of the Colony and State from 1757 to 1809. They consist of pay-rolls, letters, receipts for provisions, etc.

Vol. I. 1775-1781. Has for its first paper a letter from Col. Israel Angell, written in camp at Prospect Hill (now Somerville, Mass.), Dec. 1, 1775. In this letter he speaks of a successful privateering feat by which the army at Cambridge was greatly benefited.

Vol. II. 1757-1780. Begins with an official announcement made May 6, 1757, by Gov. William Greene, that the Earl of Loudoun, the commander-in-chief of all His British Majesty's forces in North America, had demanded of this Colony 450 able-bodied, effective men to be employed in His Majesty's service for and during the ensuing campaign.

Vol. III. 1780-1787. Has for its first paper the muster-roll of Capt. Benjamin West's company in Col. John Topham's regiment.

Vol. IV. 1778-1809. Contains lists of different military companies, muster-rolls and pay-rolls, before, during and after the Revolutionary War.

#### HARRIS PAPERS.

William Harris was one of the first settlers of Providence. He was baptized by Roger Williams in March, 1639, and died in London about 1690. He was for many years the recognized leader of the party opposed to the policy of Roger Williams. Here are some original and many copied papers of an early date. The earliest date is 1657 and the latest 1716.

#### TILLINGHAST PAPERS.

Papers with the title as above constitute four thick folio volumes chronologically arranged. The person most prominent is Jonathan Tillinghast, who was born in Newport in 1760 and died in Providence in 1806. He was a descendant of Elder Pardon Tillinghast in the fourth generation, and displayed in a brief period remarkable vigor and energy. The papers illustrate the mode of doing business at the close of the last century and at the beginning of this century. One navigation paper is signed by President John Adams and his Secretary of State, Timothy Pickering. Some of the family papers are also of interest. The dates of the volumes are as follows:

- Vol. I. 1738-1798.
- “ II. 1798-1801.
- “ III. 1801-1803.
- “ IV. 1803-1824.

## COOKE PAPERS.

Nicholas Cooke, to whom many of these papers once belonged, is usually designated as the Revolutionary War Governor of Rhode Island. He was born in Providence in 1717 and died there in 1782. He is regarded as having been one of the most public-spirited and patriotic citizens of his time. The volumes are thus labelled :

Vol. I. Miscellaneous. 1732-1801.

“ II. Revolutionary Correspondence. 1775-1781.

## BACKUS PAPERS.

Isaac Backus was born in 1724 and died in 1806. He was a Baptist preacher and rendered valuable service as an historian. The two volumes of manuscripts compiled by him, with dates from 1638 to 1731, comprise original and copied papers relating to the early history of these Plantations.

## HOPKINS PAPERS.

Esek Hopkins was the first commodore of the Continental Navy. The volumes contain his official documents and correspondence with John Paul Jones, members of the Marine Committee of Congress, and other well-known citizens. These papers are of decided historic value. Their dates are as follows :

Vol. I. 1776-1777.

“ II. 1728-1786.

“ III. 1776-1778.

## RHODE ISLAND MANUSCRIPTS.

Vol. I. Original papers of R. Williams, Wm. Harris, Gregory Dexter, Gov. Benedict Arnold, and others.

1635-1687.

Vol. II. Original papers of Pardon Tillinghast, William Arnold, and others.

1687-1706.

Vol. III. Original communications, in which the names of Richard Waterman, Stukeley Westcott, William Carpenter and William Wickenden are prominent.

1706-1828.

Vol. IV. Town controversies, in which Richard Waterman's name is foremost; also account of the privateer *Revenge*.

1723-1832.

Vol. V. Correspondence with United States Treasury Department, in which Albert Gallatin and William Ellery take an active part.

1792-1806.

Vol. VI. Letters from Judge Davis, Governor Winthrop, Judge Marchant—Judge Sullivan's official opinion—Documents relating to a Cargo of Slaves—Military accounts—Legal documents relating to claims.

1756-1805.

Vol. VII. Original letters of Washington, Simeon Thayer, General Varnum, Nicholas Cooke, Jonathan Trumbull, John Hancock, General Gates, Henry Laurens; John Jay, President of Congress, to Lieut.-Col. Silas Talbot.

1661-1828.

Vol. VIII. Plea for the Pawtuxet Purchase before the King's Commission, 1677—Gen. Sullivan's Orderly Book, 1778—Howell and Backus' Historical Memoirs of Ancient Plantation Records—James Brown's Letter Book from 1736 to 1738.

1677-1806.

Vol. IX. Claims of Rhode Island Brigade for Services in the Revolutionary War. Original and other documents.

1693-1855.

Vol. X. Account of Settlement of Nantucket—Original Invitation (1775) of Continental Congress for Patriotic Sons of Liberty to enlist—Census of Cumberland, 1782—List of those who voted for Representatives to the 19th Congress, August 30, 1825—J. L. Tillinghast papers.

1720-1843.

## MISCELLANEOUS MANUSCRIPTS.

1647-1759.

This volume contains a variety of original documents, or fragments of original documents, relating to the early history of Providence. For example, here are warrants for town meetings; requests for favors from the town; also, leases, deeds, bonds and agreements, on some of which may be found the autographs of Daniel Abbott, John Whipple, Roger Williams, Pardon Tillinghast, and Gabriel Bernton.

## MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

This is the title of seven manuscript volumes, whose character is indicated as follows:

Vols. I and II. 1643-1845. Contain many original documents, such as a letter from Gen. John Stark to Col. Wm. Barton, Oct. 25, 1779; a letter from Col. Joseph Stanton, Jr., to Lieut. Col. Barton, camp at Tiverton, R. I., July 5, 1777; a letter from Brig.-Gen. Ezekiel Cornell to Col. Barton, Newport, Nov. 17, 1779; Gen. Wm. Barton's Narrative of his particular relation to the capture of Prescott, etc.

Vols. III and IV. 1692-1833. Contain original letters and official documents from several governors of Rhode Island and of Massachusetts, and a paper relieving a soldier from service, with Washington's autograph.

Vol. V. 1651-1790. Contains writs, warrants, deeds and other legal papers.

Vol. VI. 1695-1743. Mostly sermons; one deed given by Nicholas Power in 1733, and one deed by Obadiah Brown and others, 1794.

Vol. VII. 1600-1779. Private land title deeds, all original and most of them valuable. Stephen Hopkins and Arthur Fenner's names appear. Here is the original commission of John Morley Greene as ensign in the Continental army, March 1, 1779.

## FENNER PAPERS.

1611-1821.

This volume, recently compiled, contains papers of Capt. Arthur Fenner and of his descendants. Capt. Fenner was born in England,

1622, and died in Providence 1703. He was a member of Cromwell's army and a leader in the Providence Plantations. These papers were presented to the Society by Mr. and Mrs. Pardon Fenner Brown of Manton, R. I. They comprise genealogies and original documents.

FIELD PAPERS.

1639-1831.

An interesting collection of papers presented to the Society by Wm. Field of Stafford Springs, Conn. The first paper is an agreement, signed in Providence by William Field (immigrant), March 6, 1639, and witnessed by Roger Williams. Some official papers are in the collection.

ESTEN PAPERS.

1624-1825.

Who collected or presented these papers does not appear. The autographs of Cornelius, Esek, John and Henry Esten are found in this collection, together with original wills, bonds, letters and documents that convey some idea of old charter feuds. On page 8 is a proclamation by Gov. Stephen Hopkins, which is dated May 1, 1762, stating that King George declared war against France, May 17, 1756; other papers of like import are found here.

UPDIKE PAPERS.

1733-1843.

These are from the collection of the Updike Family of Narragansett, being portions of the papers of Lodowick (1646-1736), Daniel (1694-1757), Lodowick (1725-1804), Daniel (1761-1842), and Wilkins Updike (author of Narragansett Church), (1784-1867.) Given to the Society by Daniel Berkeley Updike.

CONNECTICUT MANUSCRIPTS.

These relate to Rhode Island.

Vol. I. 1638-1679.

Vol. II. 1680-1740. These are all copies of original documents, giving a vivid idea of certain disputes between the two colonies.

## MASSACHUSETTS AND RHODE ISLAND MANUSCRIPTS.

Vol. I. 1641-1565.

Vol. II. 1665-1831.

Vol. III. 1635-1831.

These volumes contain documents, letters, etc., pertaining to Rhode Island history, all copied from the files of the General Court of Massachusetts by Joshua Coffin, who was a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society and author of the *History of Newberry..*

## SAMUEL GORTON.

His essays on the Lord's Prayer.

This volume exhibits the exquisite penmanship as well as the thought and expression of the first settler of the town of Warwick, who was born in England about 1600 and died in Warwick in 1677.

## ANCIENT DEEDS.

1690-1814.

Two volumes. One of the first deeds in Volume I. is signed Sept. 10, 1692, by John Blaxton, son of William Blaxton, the first settler of Boston. The deed is witnessed by Thomas Olney and Anthony Sprague.

## PAPERS RELATING TO PROVIDENCE.

This volume contains a good number of original papers that have come down from the first settlers.

## SAMUEL EDDY'S PRIVATE PAPERS.

Samuel Eddy was born in Johnston in 1769 and died in Providence in 1839. He was Secretary of State, 1797-1819; member of Congress, 1819-1825; chief justice, 1827-1835. These papers were given to the Society by the late James Eddy Mauran, of Newport.

## WHIPPLE PAPERS.

These papers are labelled 1733-1791, yet the first paper is dated 1661. They once belonged to the Whipple family, from the early immigrant, John, and include one paper of Commodore Abraham

Whipple, dated 1761, and scores of commercial and official scraps, some of which throw light on the time when they were made out.

#### DR. USHER PARSONS.

Two volumes. One volume contains his diary on board the *Java*, 1818-19; the other volume contains his diary during the Lake Erie campaign, 1812-14.

Dr. Parsons was born in Alfred, Me., in 1788, and died in Providence in 1868. He was the surgeon of the fleet that won the battle of Lake Erie in 1813; was five years a professor in Brown University; was remarkably industrious and the author of several scientific and historical works.

#### BOUNDARY LINE PAPERS.

##### 1738-1851.

This volume contains an account of the Controversy about the Boundary Line between Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and has the Journal kept by the late Judge Stephen Branch in 1844-5.

#### SOLDIERS AND SAILORS MONUMENT.

A well-bound folio volume containing all the correspondence relative to the erection and dedication of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. The volume was compiled by the late John R. Bartlett, and was presented to the Society by his son, Capt. John R. Bartlett, United States navy.

#### THE SOCIETY'S CORRESPONDENCE AND REPORTS.

These comprise five thick folio volumes. The autograph letters of eminent men who were honorary or corresponding members of the Society are here arranged in chronological order and possess much interest. The volumes are dated as follows:

- Vol. I. 1822-1833.
- Vol. II. 1833-1838.
- Vol. III. 1838-1845.
- Vol. IV. 1845-1852.
- Vol. V. 1852-1860.

## CANAL MARKET CORPORATION.

Five well bound volumes of its records.

1826-1872.

No mention has thus far been made of two large autograph books ; the Society's record books during its seventy years' existence ; reading-room records ; hotel records ; custom house records, including a valuable collection kept by William Ellery while he was the custom house officer at Newport ; and records of various social, charitable, religious and industrial institutions.

The large collection of carefully written genealogical papers left by the late Rev. J. P. Root is worthy of special mention.

The following are some among many manuscript papers not bound :

## MOSES BROWN.

Letter to Tristam Burges in 1836 on Rhode Island Commerce.  
Account of the Yellow Fever in Providence, from 1791 to 1797.  
Materials towards the History of Friends in New England.

## DR. SOLOMON DROWNE.

Some of his papers copied and arranged by his son, William Drowne, who was an author and a philanthropist. Dr. Drowne was born in 1753 ; graduated in Rhode Island College in 1773 ; was a surgeon in the Continental army ; a professor in Brown University, and died in 1834. The manuscripts of Dr. Drowne and of his branch of the Drowne family would constitute a good folio volume.

## CAPT. STEPHEN OLNEY.

His Account of his Services in the Revolutionary War, from the Battle of Bunker's Hill, in 1775, to the Capture of Yorktown, in 1781.

## COL. CHRISTOPHER LIPPITT.

His Autobiographical Sketch of his Life and Services for the cause of Independence.

**PROVIDENCE POST OFFICE RECORDS.**

From October, 1764, to April, 1775.

During this time Samuel Chace was succeeded by William Goddard as postmaster of Providence.

**COMER DIARY.**

Miscellaneous and church matters.

1704-1731.

**PROVIDENCE VOTERS.**

The names of all the Freemen who voted at the Presidential election in Providence Nov. 2, 1840.

**DR. E. M. SNOW.**

History of the Asiatic Cholera in Providence in 1832.

**CENSUS OF PROVIDENCE.**

1790.

**CAPT. JOHN GALLUP.**

Who was slain in the Great Swamp Fight on the 19th of December, 1675. Historical sketch of his family by Mrs. Caroline Gallup Reed, of New York.

**FRENCH MEMORIAL PAPERS.**

1881-2.

The library contains copies of several papers read before the Society and deposited here in compliance with a special vote. It also contains the original copies of several books printed years ago, including much material left by a devoted friend of the Society, the late Rev. David Benedict, D. D.

One of several relics of the colonial period that reached this cabinet through the hands of Drs. Ezra Stiles, Abiel Holmes, Usher Parsons and Charles W. Parsons, is a small volume labelled thus on the last inside page: "Manuscript sermons wrote from the Mouth

of the Preacher chiefly at New London, by Christopher Christopher, Esq. Gov. Saltonstall's Sermons, A. D. 1690." The inscription on the first inside page is: "January 14, 1769. Given by Mr. Jno. Coit to the Ecclesiastical library of Rhode Island. Received by Ezra Stiles. Vide Holmes' Life of Stiles, p. 104." Rev. Gurdon Saltonstall was graduated at Harvard University, in 1684, settled in New London, 1691, and was governor of Connecticut 1707-1724.

It is not possible here to enumerate the papers of various kinds that have come into the cabinet from various families and various quarters of our State and country. The need of clerks who possess the judgment and skill to properly assort, put in order, record and index the various kinds of historic material that have accumulated during nearly three-quarters of a century is quite apparent.

The library has more than a hundred folio volumes of manuscripts, more than twenty smaller volumes, and a good number of unbound volumes, besides numerous unassorted manuscripts contained in trunks and drawers, many of which are worthy of being classified and arranged in folio volumes. Some of these unassorted papers relate to early admiralty courts, some to State taxation, some to criminal trials, political and religious controversies and family and personal affairs.

B. Printed matter, constitutes the second kind of historic material in the library. The founders of the Society and their successors have put forth special efforts to collect such books and pamphlets as relate to Rhode Island history, including in this list works produced by Rhode Island authors and those published on Rhode Island soil. Their zeal and enterprise have resulted in bringing together books, pamphlets, newspapers, and other printed documents that are decidedly helpful to students of our local history, and they have also secured many works that have a different scope and aim.

There are estimated to be in the cabinet more than 15,000 books and two or three times that number of pamphlets besides the large collection of newspaper volumes (1,710) referred to further on. Of the different kinds of books and pamphlets that constitute the library it is observable that town histories and family genealogies are most sought and consulted and the newspaper room is a favorite resort. In this collection are some rare works, which, however attractive to relic hunters and traders, could not be estimated in dollars and cents

—works which have been presented as expressions of friendly interest in the objects of the Society and are regarded as sacred trusts.

Each of the thirty-six municipal corporations of the State has an appropriate place for its historical sketches, tax-books, school reports, census returns and various documents, and each town is here more or less represented. The library has numerous maps and charts, very few of which are rare. It has a good set of Rhode Island Schedules; Acts and Resolves; a partial set of public laws and digests; Supreme Court Reports; all the directories of Providence; all but one of the directories of Pawtucket, and also of Woonsocket; a partial set of the directories of Newport and of the towns of the State, together with a partial set of other municipal publications.

The liberal contributions of friends and of kindred institutions with which the Society is in correspondence, will appear to advantage when the re-classification of the library has been accomplished.

There is a well-arranged duplicate room in the basement of the new building. The lower story of the old cabinet is still to serve as an audience room and also for Rhode Island publications and reference books. The upper story of this room is devoted to pamphlets arranged in three classes, in a thousand or more pamphlet cases.

#### NEWSPAPERS.

Among the collections of the Society newspapers hold, and have held from the outset, a prominent place. In the upper room, in the east wing of the cabinet (there being in both wings six rooms, each  $19\frac{1}{2} \times 47\frac{1}{2}$  feet) are shelved more than seventeen hundred bound newspaper volumes, varying in the date of their publication from 1761 to 1891. The Society's records give some idea as to whence many of its newspaper volumes have come. Long before the State began to deposit (in 1875) its volumes in the cabinet, the Society had a good collection. The late William G. Goddard, who succeeded his father as a journalist, and was one of the founders of this institution, presented to the Society a numerous collection of newspaper volumes, on some of which is written the name of his father. A member of the same family has since added to these gifts.

Among the newspapers thus received are fifteen or twenty thick volumes published (either in Philadelphia, Baltimore or Alexandria), between 1761 and 1791. From various other sources have been received many contributions of the same general character, as, for

example, the *Liberator*, 1837-1865; the *Boston Journal*, 1857-1867; the *National Intelligencer*, 1810-1830, except for the years 1811, 1815, 1817 and 1825; the *Journal of Commerce*, 1843-1849; *Shipping and Commercial List*, 1842-1845, and many other broken sets of highly prized old newspapers. Gifts of valuable newspapers continue to be received. Many volumes are added by purchase. In March, 1889, over two hundred volumes were thus procured.

More than nine-tenths of the newspapers of which the Society is either the owner or the custodian, were published in Rhode Island. A beginning has been made in the work required in the newspaper room. The volumes of each series of papers are arranged, as they should be, in chronological order, though not catalogued, and the different series of a city or town are placed near each other. The *Newport Mercury*, the oldest Rhode Island newspaper, occupies the foremost place in the room. Its early volumes are wanting. Though its publication was begun in 1758, the first volume found here is that of 1772, and there are many serious breaks in the list after that period.

The next series in order of time is the *Providence Gazette*, which was begun in 1762. This was absorbed by the *Providence Journal*, and has been continued under the latter name to the present time,—one hundred and thirty years. Though each year is represented in the Society's collection by either a weekly, a semi-weekly or a daily issue, a volume of one or the other of these kinds is here and there missing.

At one end of the long shelf row of these volumes is the volume of 1762, which, bound up with the volumes of five other years, constitutes a volume of very moderate size and thickness, while, at the other end are the three large thick volumes of 1891. The *Mercury* and *Gazette-Journal* series of papers are followed by other series of decided interest and value. With improved lists of all our local papers, especially those of an early date, the hope is entertained that at no distant day a history of the newspapers of the respective cities and towns of the State may be compiled.

One of the six large new rooms, referred to above, is devoted to the publications, duly grouped, of all the New England States, except Rhode Island. Another of these rooms is devoted to the publications of all the States of the Union except those of New England. Here each State speaks for itself. In the New England group Massachusetts has the most inviting show. Of the States out-

side of New England, New York probably appears to best advantage. In another room are to be classified and arranged the publications of the United States government and of the Smithsonian Institution, and in still another room are to be the publications of foreign countries and collections of miscellaneous literature.

C. The third class of historic material consists of paintings, engravings, badges, medals, flags, swords, and relics or memorials of various kinds (not written or printed) that illustrate local history.

The upper room in the west wing of the building is devoted to this class of material and to constitute an historic museum where will be found, it is presumed, illustrations of the Indian period of Rhode Island history, of the colonial period, and of the industries, manners, customs and events of various periods. Some of the articles that will find here an appropriate place are Indian money, Indian domestic utensils, Indian implements of war, together with relics or memorials of the Pequot War, King Philip's War, the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Dorr War, the Mexican War, the War of the Rebellion, and, it is hoped, also emblems of peace and good will among men.

In a large fire-proof safe is the blue jacket worn by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry on the 10th of September, 1813, when he fought and won the battle of Lake Erie; and near it is the elegant and costly sword, on which is engraved the following inscription :

PRESENTED  
TO  
OLIVER H. PERRY, Esq.,  
BY THE  
COMMON COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF  
ALBANY,  
NOV. 8TH,  
1813.

Another article of much interest belonging to this class of material is a panoramic view of Providence as it appeared eighty years ago to a person standing at the junction of Broadway and Atwell's avenue and looking eastward. This picture, which was painted by Mr. Worrall, was begun in 1808 and completed in 1812. It served for nearly a score of years as a drop scene in the old Providence theatre, which stood on the site of Grace Church. After having been laid

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aside most of the time for threescore years it is now unrolled and exposed to view on the north wall of the old cabinet where it gives a good idea of a portion of the town when many of the Revolutionary fathers were daily seen upon the streets.

Other illustrations of this class are in the portrait gallery which constitutes a marked feature of the enlarged cabinet. This gallery is twenty-seven feet square and has a sky-light which shows to advantage the valuable paintings already hung on its walls. Under this dome is an inviting place for the portraits of Rhode Island men and women who have done honor to themselves, their State and their country.

Some of the portraits and pictures in the portrait gallery are as follows :

James Fenner, artist, Lincoln, copied by Miss Chapin ; John Howland, artist, Lincoln ; Albert G. Greene, artist, Lincoln ; Samuel G. Arnold, artist, Miss Chapin ; Zachariah Allen, artist, Lincoln ; William Gammell, artist, Breuil ; Thomas M. Clark, artist, Heade ; John Callender, artist, Feke ; James McSparran, artist, Smibert, copied by Miss Updike ; Mrs. J. McSparran, artist, Smibert, copied by Miss Updike ; Henry Barnard, artist, Lincoln ; Charles D. Jillson, artist, Lincoln ; Thomas F. Carpenter, artist, Lincoln ; Elisha Dyer, artist, Lincoln ; Samuel Eddy, artist, Alexander ; Tom Howland, artist, Blanchard ; Oliver H. Perry, frame made from a piece of his flagship, the *Lawrence* ; Daniel Webster, John H. Mason, Joseph Belcher, Joseph Wanton, Mrs. Joseph Wanton, William Barton, Catharine R. Williams, John H. Eddy, Enos Hitchcock, Thomas Coles, James Burrill, Lewis L. Miller, Francis Wayland, Abraham Whipple, Joseph W. Fearing, Ambrose E. Burnside, William E. Channing ; A Scene at the Great Bridge during the September Gale of 1815, artist, Wall, copied by J. R. Bartlett ; Federal Hill as seen from Canal street in 1829, artist, Harris ; India Point in 1847, artist, Kinsley C. Gladding ; Wall Street, New York, in 1815.

No detailed account of the library can here be given. Some idea of its scope and character may, however, be gained from a consideration of the facts already stated and the classification adopted. Besides its various manuscripts, the library consists of 15,000 books, many of which are of a high order and well bound ; 35,000 pamphlets, 1,700 volumes of newspapers and numerous relics, memorials and works of art that properly belong to an historic museum. Many curious and interesting articles of the last kind have not been re-

moved from their quiet resting places for years, and, in the opinion of the librarian, should not be disturbed until cases are prepared to receive and to protect them from fingers that have done some mischief and are ready to do more.

If the work laid out is carried forward as it should be, this institution will supplement and elevate the system of public education of which the people of the State are justly proud.

The Society\* has become by force of circumstances a recognized medium of communication with institutions and individuals engaged in kindred pursuits, and it has thus had devolved upon it a large amount of correspondence to conduct which requires time and effort. Its cabinet is a resort for persons seeking historical and genealogical information and local statistics. Rhode Islanders and their descendants residing in different parts of the country come or send here to gain information about their family lines and ancestral homes. Some come to settle titles to real estate; some to consult newspapers, and learn about scenes and events of which they have heard; and some to ascertain whether they are entitled to become members of the Order of the Cincinnati, or of the Society of the Sons or of the Daughters of the Revolution.

The collections of the Society, as shown in the foregoing very imperfect sketch, are not all that could be wished; nay, they are not what they would have been if the Society had been organized a third of a century earlier and provided with a suitable cabinet; yet these collections, however fragmentary, are of such value that were they destroyed, the State of Rhode Island, with all its material wealth, would be thereby impoverished.

The enlightened policy inaugurated by the founders of this Society of seeking to preserve the archives of the State and various papers that illustrate the fundamental principles of our social and political fabric is now endorsed by several of our most progressive states and most advanced statesmen. They regard historical societies as a part of an expanded system of public education. There is authority for the statement that papers illustrating the fundamental principles of government often serve as means of amicable settlements of questions that would otherwise involve expensive litigation.

The Society has a sphere of action of unquestioned importance. Though it is threescore and ten years old, it seems just setting out on a career of increased usefulness. It has recently acquired a pub-

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\* Formed April 19, chartered June 15, and first annual officers elected July 19, 1822.

